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ABSTRACT

This project is a program of the Hood River Valley (Oregon) Opportunity School, a half-day alternative school attended by at-risk students. The project's objective is to teach fundamental academics through a practical experience in setting up and running a small business: the wholesale purchasing and retail mail-order sales of wildflower seeds. Contents include a project description with work schedule and worksite characteristics analysis; background information on the Opportunity School; a list of benefits of the project; additional information on project activities; and sample sales forms. A list of the areas of the curriculum to be taught through entrepreneurship with corresponding objectives is included, and a job description checklist is also provided. Other contents include copies of newspaper articles on the project and the wildflower seed catalog, with descriptions of flower seeds available. (YLB)

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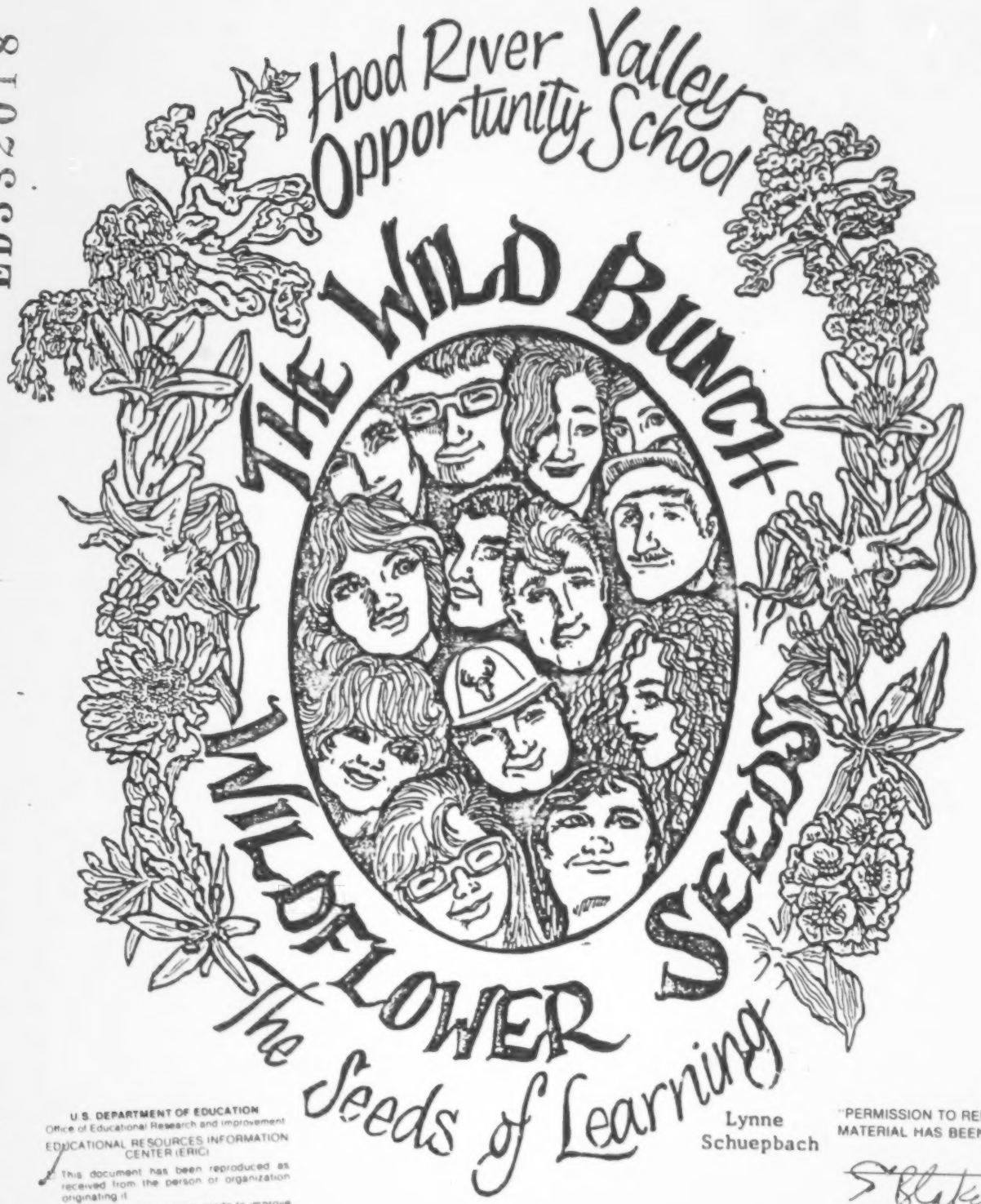

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THE WILDBUNCH SEED COMPANY

Type of Business: Entrepreneurship: Student "owned" and operated business. Wholesale purchasing and retail mail-order sales of wildflower seeds by alternative school students (population: approximate 50% L.D.).

Address: Wildbunch Seed Company, %Opportunity School, P.O. Box 920, Hood River, Oregon 97031

Phone: (503) 386-2055

Contact Persons: Gary Foster or Stevie Blakely

Positions With Firm: Teachers with Opportunity School - Stevie Blakely is also a Special Needs Work Coordinator for the school district.

Work Schedule: Varies according to needs of the business. Each student is scheduled into Opportunity School four periods per day. Two sessions: morning or afternoon, eleven students each session. From 15 minutes to 3 hours are spent in business-related activities daily.

Transportation Plan: Opportunity School van

Appropriate for Individual With Following Disabilities: Planned for L.D. but could be used with others.

Work Site Characteristics Analysis:

A. Amount of Supervision Given: 2 adults for each 11 students

B. Accident/Illness Policy: School Insurance, parent permission slips for field trips.

C. Late/Absent Policy: 80% attendance to remain in program. Absences naturally lower profits for an individual. Students must call in the cause of absence. Tardiness earns "dirty work details" without pay.

D. Uniform Requirements: Change into "work clothes" for field trips.

E. Salary: Profit sharing payments monthly. Individual payments equal amount proportional to work time of entire class in the business (after expenses and investments). (50% of gross income goes to students.)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It is the mission of the Hood River County Opportunity School to provide an alternative secondary school experience designed to reduce student dropout and assist with at-risk kids by providing instruction in academic skills, problem solving, communication and community life skills.

Opportunity School was developed to address the needs of students at risk of droping out, failing to successfully complete course work needed for graduation, or experiencing special difficulties in the regular high school setting.

The Opportunity School program has been in operation since 1976-77. The location is off campus. This is based on a 1984-85 study which determined that the program was more effective when located away from the regular school. It serves 35 to 45 students per year, and the students are split into morning and afternoon groups.

Students attend Opportunity School one-half day and the other half of the day are placed at the regular school, work positions, or on home study. Up to five full-time HRVHS students also work on "independent study" supervised through Opportunity School. Most students have a combination of low skills, behavior problems, and severe credit deficits. Students are placed in the program upon recommendation of the Placement Committee or administratively by the Assistant Superintendent.

The program is operated by a learning disabilities specialist who has worked in the Hood River School District with "At-Risk" youth since 1978. An instructional aide also works part time daily.

In the 1988-89 school year a Special Needs Work Coordinator was added to the staff. The coordinator assists in teaching career education classes and in supervision on individual work sites. The Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Support Services acts as administrator for the program. There is an Opportunity School liaison at HRVHS to assist in coordinating student programs. The Opportunity School committee provides guidance.

BENEFITS

The primary goal, of the the "Wild Bunch Seed Company," is to teach fundamental academics through practical experiences. Students who are "At-Risk" learn best in an environment where:

1. Materials and the instructoral approach is adopted to the student's learning modality.
2. Frequent positive feedback and acknowledgment of student accomplishments.
3. Opportunities are provided for success and therefore avoiding the likelihood of failure.
4. Students can develop coping skills through pre-vocational and vocational skills.
5. Interesting, varied activities are provided daily on material based on real-life and hands-on experiences.
6. Students can become prepared for the world of work.

It is because of these reasons that entrepreneurship seems a viable process to teach students fundamental academics through hands-on experience of setting up and running a small business.

WILDBUNCH SEED COMPANY

Additional Information: The wildfower seed project is planned as an on-going "business."

With "phase I," we started small and simple. At first, only about a dozen types of seeds were offered. All "standard seed packets" sell for 50 cents each; offer many times more seeds per dollar than "competitors;" and costs us less than 10 cents to produce (not including catalog printing, advertising, postage, etc.). This stage involves simply purchasing wholesale, re-packaging, and selling. Math, Language, Reading, and Speaking are taught as job-specific skills because students handle catalog preparation, purchasing, selling activities, math calculations and accounting. Beyond the standard seed packet, volume sells include ounce, 1/4 pound, 1/2 pound, and pound amounts. Since the Opportunity School teacher grows wildflowers as a hobby (1 acre of land), all wildflowers have been test-grown locally, and only the most successful are being offered.

"Phase II" of the project takes students out into the field for collection and identification of seeds not usually offered commercially. This larger step involves science (conservation, ecology, and botany) and social studies (local geography, conservation ethics, etc.) in addition to skills learned in the earlier stages. Students also become involved in the Native Plant Society and with local plant experts.

School credit is available in Career Education and Work Experience (18 class periods equals one-tenth of a Carnegie Unit).

WILD BUNCH SEED COMPANY

SALE PRICES on LARGER AMOUNTS

Write "SALE" on your order form.	SALE PRICE OUNCES	REG. PRICE ounce	SALE PRICE 1/4 LB.	REG. PRICE 1/4 pound	SALE PRICE 1/2 LB.	REG. PRICE 1/2 pound	SALE PRICE LB.
PERENNIALS							
Yarrow	$4.50	$6.00	$10.75	$15.00	$21.25	$25.50	$30.50
Bachelor Button	$1.50	$2.00	$ 3.75	$6.00	$ 7.50	$ 9.00	$14.00
Wallflower	$2.75	$4.50	$ 7.00	$11.00	$13.75	$16.00	$21.00
Daisy	$3.50	$5.00	$ 8.75	$13.00	$17.50	$21.00	$26.00
Blanket Flower	$4.75	$6.50	$12.00	$16.00	$23.75	$28.50	$33.50
Blue Flax	$2.25	$3.00	$ 5.75	$9.00	$11.25	$13.00	$18.00
Perenial Lupine	$3.50	$5.00	$ 8.75	$14.00	$17.50	$22.50	$27.50
Coreopsis	$3.50	$5.00	$ 8.75	$14.00	$17.50	$22.50	$27.50
California Poppy	$2.25	$3.00	$ 5.75	$9.00	$11.25	$13.00	$18.00

AVOID DELIVERY DELAYS
BUY NOW FOR FALL
PLANTING

ANNUALS (self-seeding)							
Baby Blue Eyes	$3.50	$5.00	$8.75	$13.00	$17.50	$21.00	$26.00
MIXES *							
Pacific Northwest Mix	$3.50	$5.00	$8.75	$14.00	$17.50	$22.50	$27.50
Dryland Mix	$3.50	$5.00	$8.75	$14.00	$17.50	$22.50	$27.50

COMPARE: Another company offers bulk wildflower seeds for $83.75 per lb., $27.95 per 1/4 lb., or $9.00 per ounce.

* See catalog for types of flowers offered in our mixes.
** Orders received after June 1st won't be filled until September.

PRICE LIST: NEW WILDFLOWER SEED VARIETIES

Standard Packets 50¢ each (larger amounts listed below)
ORDERS RECEIVED AFTER JUNE 1ST WON'T BE FILLED UNTIL SEPTEMBER

	½ OZ	1 OZ	¼ LB	½ LB	1 LB	Annual Perennial Biennial
Baby's Breath (Gypsohilia Elegans)		1.00	2.50	5.00	8.00	A
Cosmos Sensation Mix	$1.50	2.25	5.75	11.25	18.00	A
Rocket Larkspur (Delphinium Ajacis)	$2.75	4.25	10.75	21.25	34.00	A
Forget-Me-Not (Cynoglossum Firmament)	$1.25	1.75	4.50	8.75	14.00	A
Farewell To Spring (Godetia/~~Clarkia~~ Amonea Single Dwarf)	$2.50	3.75	9.50	18.75	30.00	A
Farewell To Spring (Clarkia Elegans)	$2.25	3.50	8.75	17.50	28.00	A
Queen Anne's Lace (Daucus Carota)	$1.00	1.50	3.75	7.50	12.00	A
Globe Gilia (Gilia Capitata)	$2.25	3.25	8.25	16.25	25.00	A
Red Flax (Linum Rubrum)	$1.50	2.25	5.75	11.25	18.00	A
Money Plant (Lunaria)	$1.50	2.25	5.75	11.25	17.00	B
Lupine, Sickle Keeled	$1.00	1.50	3.75	7.50	12.00	
Hooker's Evening Primrose (Oenothera Hookeri)	$1.25	1.75	4.50	8.75	14.00	B
Evening Primrose (Lamarckiana)	$1.25	1.75	4.50	8.75	14.00	B
Mountain Phlox (Linanthus Grandiflorus)	$5.75	8.75	22.00	40.00	70.00	A
Butterfly Weed (Ascepias Tuberosa)	17.50	35.00	---	---	---	P
Scarlet Gilia (Ipomopsis Rubia)	$5.25	8.00	20.00	35.00	64.00	B
Birdsfoot Trefoil (Lotus Corniculatus)	$1.25	1.75	4.50	8.75	14.00	P
Chicory (Cichorium Intybus)	$2.25	3.25	8.25	16.25	25.50	P
Dame's Rocket (Hesperis Matroralis)	$2.25	3.50	8.75	17.50	28.00	P
Annual Phlox (Phlox Drummondii)	$7.50	11.25	28.25	56.25	90.00	A
Dried Flower Mix	$4.00	6.00	15.00	30.00	48.00	Mix

WILD BUNCH SEED COMPANY
Opportunity School
P.O. Box 920
Hood River, OR 97031
(503) 386-2305

TELEPHONE

DATE: _____

NUMBER ORDERED	SIZE	NAME OF ITEM	PRICE	OFFICE USE

Since the "WILD BUNCH" is also a school, we don't work during the summer. Orders received after June 1st won't be filled until september. Fall (September and October) is a good time to plant perennial wildflowers because it's a rainy period. Seeds you don't plant during spring or early summer can be stored in your refrigerator (in paper containers, not plastic) to maintain the highest germination rates.

PLEASE CONTINUE ON OTHER SIDE

CODES USED WHEN FILLING YOUR ORDER:

S.O.=Sold Out	*O.P.=Out of Print*	*C.P.=Current Price*	*C.E.=Credit Enclosed*
W.F.=Will Follow	*B.O.=Back Ordered*	*S.S.=Sent Separate*	*R.S.=Refund Separate*
N.C.=Not Charged	*C.F.=Crop Failure*	*S.E.=Stamp Enclosed*	*T.O.S.=Temp. Out of Stock*
N.L.A.=No Longer Available		*S.C.=Short Crop*	
Evaluated By	*Filled By*	*Checked By*	*DATE*

TOTAL OF THIS SIDE		
TOTAL OF OTHER SIDE		
HANDLING CHARGE	$1	.00
TOTAL AMOUNT OF MY ORDER		

Thank you for your order.

Please print or type your name and shipping address

_____

_____

_____

Telephone ( )

PLEASE PROVIDE STREET ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER TO ASSURE PROMPT DELIVERY.

Areas of curriculum to be taught through entrepreneurship:

Curriculum	Objective
Math	Students will make change quickly and accurately. Students will accurately measure and weigh seeds per ounce, ¼ pound, etc.
Business Accounting	Students will maintain a business accounting system and balance the books after each transaction. Students will correctly set up a new customer account. Students will correctly record sales transactions in the proper journal.
Advertising/Art	Students will design and produce a catalog for the seed business.
Typing	Students will properly type seed envelopes with correct information and type.
Language Arts	Students will read for information on planting, care, and picking of wildflowers. Students will write accurately and correctly the orders to the wholesale company.
Vocational	Students will prepare material for mailing, labeling, determining class/services of postage, and attach correct postage.
Geography	Students will identify areas of the Columbia Gorge where certain species of wildflowers grow best.
Science	Students will identify and classify wildflowers to their common and species name.
Social Skills	Students will be members of The Native Plant Society of the Columbia Gorge. Students will speak to civic groups about their business and experiences.

NOTE: Students may be placed in any/or a combination of, the following tasks, according to ability.

JOB DESCRIPTION CHECKLIST
(Phase I)

STATUS

1- Fills out various order forms for wholesale seed & other supply purchases.

2-Distributes mail-order catalogue door-to-door, advertising "Flyers" to businesses, etc.

3-Opens order envelopes w/out damaging customer order form.

4-Checks math on order form w/calculator(item & final total).

5-Sorts orders into 3 groups: a- checks; b-Customers ordering only standard seed packets; c- larger orders(oz., ¼lb, ½lb).

6-Lists total dollar sum, date, and customer name in "accounts received" book.

7-Copies customer order forms on zerox machine. Copies & collates mail-order catalogue. (staple)

8-Alphabetically files copy of customer order.

9-Enter customer name and address in computor label file. (store/print).

10-Enter common & sci. name of flowers& package weight for standard packets in computor label file (store/print).

11-Attaches computor labels to empty seed packets & puts into seed file boxes.

12-Fills specified "measuring spoon"(labeled) w/specified type of seed and empties into appropriate packets (labeled); seals packets and places into seed filing boxes(labeled).

13-Reads order form and puts listed number of seed packets (from seed filing boxes) of ea. specified type of seeds, into large mailing envelopes. Puts original order form into same envelope, (w/ other printed matter if applicable).

14-Accurately weighs-out oz., ¼lb. & ½lb amounts per second group of order forms, put into larger seed envelopes, seals neatly w/ scotch tape, puts inside mailing envelope w/ order form. (and literature)

Job Working Member/ Wildbunch Seed Co. Trainee _____

Location Opportunity Sch./Hood River Sch.Dist. Phone 386-2055

JOB DESCRIPTION CHECKLIST (Continued) STATUS
(Phase I)

15-Re-checks work of classmates (accurately filling orders)(#13,14). _____
(write customer's name in lower right corner of envelope;seal.)
16-Attaches computor label of customer's address on large mailing envelope, _____
and return address label. _____
17- Weighs customer package and determines appropriate postage _____
& writes amount in upper right corner of envelope. _____
18-Attaches proper postage(over written amount). _____
19-Place customer package in District mailing boxes(local/or out of town). _____
Check "Finished" column of "accounts received" book when mailing. _____
20-Class Treasure: _____
Keep itemized accounting of ~~these~~ _____
transactions. _____
_____
21- Calculate monthly "Share-the-profit" amounts for workers. _____
22-All working members: remain at task during all work periods. _____
23-All working members: record work hrs on ~~XIX~~ time-cards daily. _____

(Phase II)

(ADDITIONAL JOB DESCRIPTIONS: "SEED COMPANY" EXPANDED)

1- Class trips to find, mark locations, and identify abundant wildflower _____
growth in the field. _____
2-Return visits to harvest seed. Cut seed heads off stem w/ scissors _____
and place in large paper sacks w/out including neighboring "weeds". _____
3- Hand cleaning of seeds (Various hand seives & "floating" _____
off remaining chaff; drying seeds). Also: Using seed cleaning Machine. _____
4-Seed germination tests (keeping seeds moist between paper towels, labeling, & _____
recording % of germination, date of test. _____

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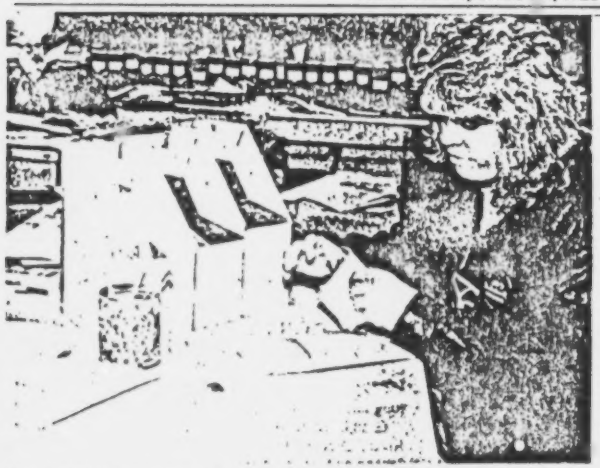
Wildflower seeds are learning tool; Kaleidoscope, Sec. 2, P.1

Hood River News

VOL. 84 NO. 15 | HOOD RIVER, OREGON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1990 | 48 PAGES, 3 SECTIONS | Official Newspaper, City of Hood River and Hood River County | 50¢ COPY



MAIL ORDERS – Cami Carter readies seed packets for mailing. Students perform various tasks and share in company profits.

13 Story and photos by Polly Timberman, Kaleidoscope editor

IN THE FIELD – When wildflowers bloom, students tag them for seed collection in the fall.

14

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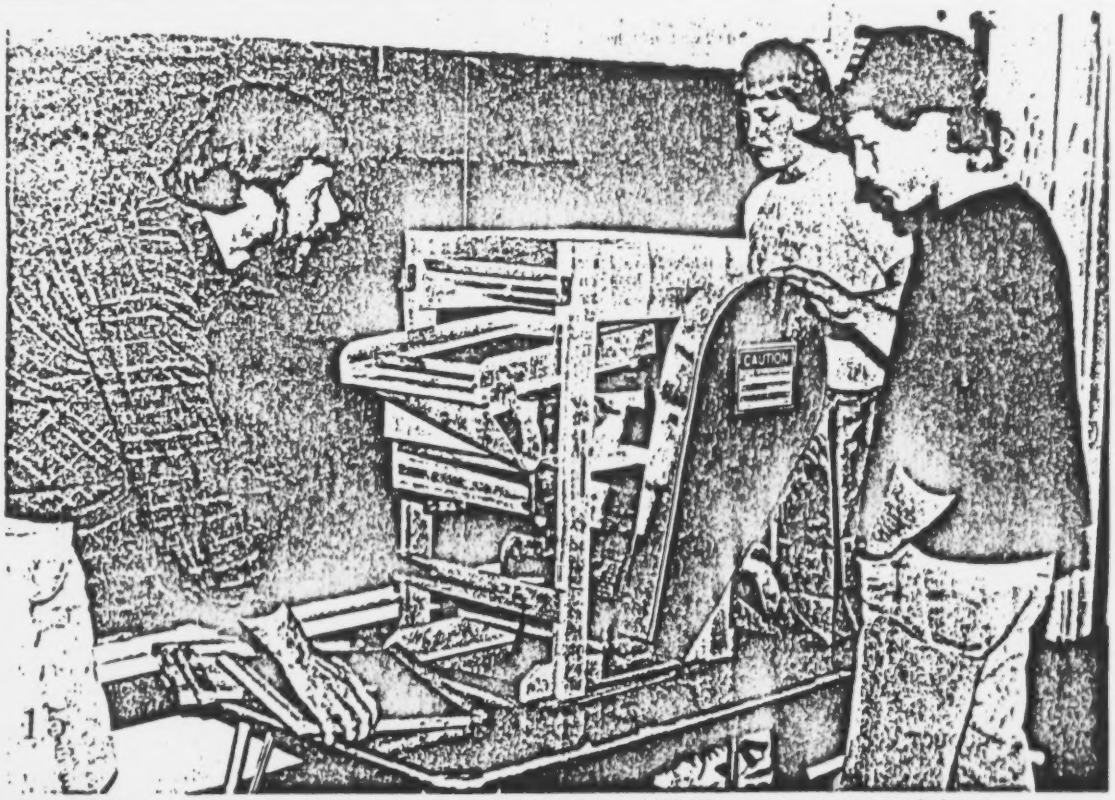

SEED CLEANER – Instructor Gary Foster and students Chris Claxton and Mike Brown try out a new seed cleaner.

OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL
"Wild Bunch Seed Company"
WILDFLOWER SEEDS
SAVE 70¢ to 95¢
50¢ ea.
FREE CATALOG!
(FLOWER DESCRIPTIONS & GROWING GUIDE)
WHOLESALE PRICES on LARGER AMOUNTS!

Learning while earning

Students at Hood River Valley Opportunity School pick up basic academic skills as they run a wildflower seed company.

For a group of Hood River teenagers, life is coming up daisies ... and poppies, lupines and bachelor buttons.

As others are photographing spring wildflowers, these teens are staking them out so they can collect the seed later in the year.

They call themselves the Wild Bunch Seed Company, and for them, the profits are far greater than the money brought in from seeds marketed under their label. As they learn various phases of the business, they also pick up academic skills.

"It's a chance to do something other than schoolwork, but it's involved with school," says student Cindy Iles. "I've been here about a month, and I've learned more than I can ever remember learning in regular school."

"In classes at the high school, you do it just for education." In this, "You are learning about the environment, and it gives you a chance to earn a little extra money," says Bill Troxell, another student. "It's not just a play trip. You do work."

Iles and Troxell are two of 22 students at Hood River Valley Opportunity School. These students are practical learners, says instructor Gary Foster. While others learn easily from books and lectures, these students learn best by doing.

"Opportunity School is for students who, for one reason or another, aren't successful in regular classes," Foster says. While they are mostly of high school age, a few of middle- school age attend.

The students are divided into two classes. One meets mornings, the other in the afternoon at Coe Primary Building. During remaining school hours, some work at jobs, and some attend regular classes. Programs are individually designed to meet the needs of each student.

Foster and his assistant, Mary Jane Swanson (also a certified teacher), focus mainly on teaching basic skills. They work closely with Stevie Blakely, a vocational coordinator who finds job placements and helps students prepare for the world of work.

"That's how we got started talking about an entrepreneurship," Blakely says, "a real-life, hands-on business." In doing so, "We figured we should try something we knew something about. Gary knew a lot about seeds. He grows wildflowers as a hobby."

For Gary Foster, growing wildflowers has been an engrossing pastime for four or five years. Of his 11 acres at Mt. Hood, about 1½ acres are planted to wildflowers. Over the seasons, he has experienced crop failures and successes. He has learned a good deal about the kinds of wildflowers that will grow and flourish in the Hood River area.

He also saw the large prices charged for minute quantities of seed. He figured a student company could offer a bargain to those purchasing its product. ("Save 70 to 90 percent on our seed prices!" boasts the catalog.)

The idea was posed last fall. By January, the Wild Bunch Seed Company was in business.

In December, the organizers learned that they had obtained a $2,300 grant from Fred Meyer Charitable Trust. In addition to paying for a seed cleaner, the money helped subsidize catalog printing, postage, a scale and seed envelopes.

"We started small," Foster says – 10 varieties of seed and two types of mixes. The company is already preparing to offer about 20 more varieties.

In learning about the business, the group sought help from Nichols Rare Seeds in Albany. It was there that they learned about the seed cleaner and how to use it. The Albany company had also started small, as a family business with little capital.

"This is a student owned and operated business," Foster says. "The students will change from year to year." Half the income will go back into the business each year. The remainder is divided between the students, based on the hours each has worked.

"They like the paychecks," Foster says. "They also learn you don't make much money when you are starting out."

"These students are really motivated to work," he says, telling of transformations in some of the "at risk" students. "They find out why it is necessary to learn math as they help with the books, add up orders and measure and weigh seeds. They learn language skills as they market their seeds to the community ... All your basic subjects are brought into the project."

'It's not just a play trip. You do work.'

"They learn the areas where Columbia Gorge wildflowers grow best," Blakely says. "They have to learn to identify and classify common and species names ... They learn about ecology and science as they learn the cycles of growing plants, from seed to flower."

Ethical issues come into play as they learn to not endanger rare species in their seed gathering, Blakely says. The group works with landowners and public agencies in locating gathering places.

The local Native Plant Society helped them learn when to collect seeds, and what percentage to collect. Artwork and advertising skills go into the catalog and flyers.

"It's also getting students to work well together as a group. It's a group effort," Blakely says.

In addition, they are learning how to work, she says.

"In the classroom, you can teach students to fill out forms and do mock interviews, but you can't teach them how to work. In this project, they learn work ethics, how to take orders, and how to stay on task.

"You can tell them these things are necessary, but in the classroom, there's no way to put them into practice. In the business, you do these things," she says.

Many of the ideas for selling the product have been contributed by students, Foster says. "They're very motivated in ways to make a profit."

In this first year, the students are packaging and selling seeds purchased wholesale from Oregon growers. Some local stores handle the seeds, but most sales are on a mail-order basis.

The next phase is to collect and process more and more of the seed sold. Collecting will swing into high gear in the fall.

Wild Bunch Seed Company will sell two types seeds – those just about anyone can grow, and special varieties for connoisseurs and experienced growers.

"We will never sell anything that hasn't been tested in our area," Blakely says. Foster's wildflower meadows provides an ample testing ground.

Foster can't forget the hundreds of dollars worth of seeds that he lavished on that meadow before he learned which flowers would grow there, and which would not.

"Beyond educating the kids, we want to interest people in the local environment by offering high-quality wildflower seeds at a reasonable price," he says. As an added help, "The catalog reads like a grower's guide rather than a catalog."

The project has already won a lot of attention for the Hood River Valley Opportunity School. It received a letter from Governor Goldschmidt applauding the effort. In addition, the project will be featured in the monthly bulletin of the Oregon State Youth Commission.

Educators across the nation will learn about the Wild Bunch Seed Company this month when organizers address a national conference of special-needs educators.

Interested community members can learn more about wildflower growing at periodic classes conducted by the company and sponsored by Hood River County School District Community Education.

Seed catalogs are available at the Community Education Office, 11th and Eugene streets. Seeds are sold there and at various stores around the valley.

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Community

Update

the newsletter of the
OREGON COMMUNITY
CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES
COMMISSION

April 1990

COUNTY LINES . . .

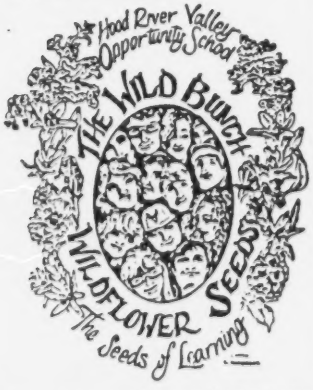
STUDENT-RUN BUSINESS BLOOMING IN HOOD RIVER COUNTY

Students, teachers and customers are going wild over a new catalog seed business started in Hood River County.

Operating out of the Hood River School District Opportunity School, the Wild Bunch Seed Company has already produced and distributed several thousand copies of their wildflower seed catalog to potential customers since January.

A joint project of the school's staff and students, the idea for a seed catalog company sprouted from a discussion between the two teachers directing the project, Stevie Blakely and Gary Foster.

Their idea was to bring an entrepreneurship project into the classroom to apply in a practical, hands-on way the skills the students learn in conventional classes.



Since growing wildflowers is a hobby for Foster, they decided to research a business in a field they had some experience. And they liked what they found.

After a little digging, they discovered that there was room in the seed catalog market for a business like theirs.

Since the fall, the 22 students and the two teachers have published a catalog which offers 10 kinds of individual wildflowers and two mixtures of seeds. To distribute the free catalogs, the students went door-to-door in Hood River last fall. And since January, they have been busy taking orders from as far away as California and Arizona and will soon reach the $1000 mark in sales.

The business is set up so that 50% of the gross income covers the costs of printing, seeds, envelopes and advertising. The other half goes to pay the students. Foster says that the students really enjoyed receiving their first paychecks. "But, they're pretty small right now," according to Blakely.

With the help of a small grant they received from the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust, the fledgling company has been able to grow in new directions. Blakely says that the grant has allowed them to pay for some necessities, like envelopes and printing for catalogs. But, more importantly, it has also helped them to acquire a seed cleaner and some small classified ads in newspapers outside of Hood River.

The seed cleaner will be essential in helping them to increase the varieties of seeds they offer in their product line, according to Blakely. Most of the seeds the company has in stock are ones ordered through a wholesaler. They now plan to add to their stock by offering wildflower seeds which grow well in the Columbia Gorge region.

Early this spring, they will begin research and development on the new seed varieties. Foster will lead the students out in the field, where they will identify and individually mark each flowers which they would like to sell. After the flowers have gone to seed later in the spring, they will return and collect the seeds. They will then use the new machine to clean seeds, and test them before adding them to the catalog.

Word of the success of the student-run business is spreading, and offering new opportunities to the students and the teachers. Blakely says that along with some of their students, she and Foster will make a presentation on the business in April at a regional conference held in Portland for the National Association of Vocational Special Needs Personnel. But it will also be business as usual, since, according to Blakely, they will use the opportunity to "sell seeds, too."

Both Blakely and Foster are excited about the project and say that the students clearly are enthusiastic about the business. "These students respond well to education when they get a chance to learn by doing. They really eat this up," Foster explained.

To find out more about the project, or to obtain a free catalog, you can contact Blakely or Foster at P.O. Box 920, Hood River, OR 97031-0030.

WESTERN REGION MEETING SCHEDULED

The local Children & Youth Services Commissions in the Western Region will have their first chance to meet as a region on April 21, 1990 to discuss training issues with staff from the OCCYSC and Oregon State University.

A tentative agenda for the meeting has been set and includes a presentation on program technical assistance by the OSU Technical Assistance Center, a presentation by Jeff Milligan on program evaluation and monitoring, as well as a brief orientation on statewide activities and the roles of local commissioners. Time has also been scheduled to share ideas about commission issues and concerns.

Vickie Stott, Regional Coordinator for the Western Region, says that all of the chairs and staff in the Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Polk and Lane counties have been contacted, and that the agenda and other details will be finalized in mid-April after a meeting with the Western Region staff persons.

Hood River News

Hood River, Oregon, Wednesday, November 8, 1989 7

Class to begin sale of seeds

☐ News staff report
By ANDREW OMAN

Teachers at the Hood River County School District Opportunity School are trying something wild to teach high school students about business and the world of work.

Catalogs will soon be available from The Wild Bunch Seed Company, a joint venture between the school's staff and students. Under the direction of teachers Steve Blakely and Gary Foster, the students will order bulk wildflower seeds from an Oregon wholesaler, repackage and label the seeds and sell them through a mail order catalog. Teachers say the student company will be all business, but they believe good business will lead to better academics.

The 22 young people in the Opportunity School are high school students who, for a variety of reasons, are not reaching their potential spending a full day at the high school and benefit from the half-day of more individualized instruction. Half of the group attends a morning session and the other half attends an afternoon session. Most spend the other half of their school day attending regular classes at Hood River Valley High School, although some others earn credit through working at outside jobs.

"We're looking at ways to teach academics in a functional manner," because they found many students in the school tend to learn more from active, hands-on instruction, Blakely says. She and Foster had been discussing ways to give the students business training while improving their basic skills, and they decided a seed company would be the "natural" choice.

A little research showed wildflower seeds are usually sold at a high markup. Foster says, so the student enterprise will be able to sell seeds less expensively than others without a great deal of investment. Foster cultivates and studies wildflowers on his property in the Mt. Hood-Parkdale area and he has incorporated his experience into the catalog, which actually reads more like a "how-to" manual on selecting and cultivating wildflowers.

"We looked around at a lot of different things ... we thought we'd pick something we knew something about," Blakely says. She and Foster will provide the experience and managerial skills, but the students will complete order forms, weigh and repackage the seeds, fill customer's orders and put them in the mail.

"They will finally see why they have to do math," Foster says. Math skills will be required for preparing forms and keeping records. Marketing their product will require language skills and identifying plants will require science skills.

"It covers quite a few different areas," Blakely says. Physical education might also be included: the business' start-up budget is low and students will save postage by delivering their catalogs by hand, in some cases door to door.

The student company will offer 10 individual varieties of wildflowers and two seed mixtures. Catalog distribution will begin in two to three weeks, when their first shipment of seeds arrives, although they don't expect a rush a customers until January or February. In the mean time, they will learn their business and get the seeds repackaged in sizes from a gram to a half-pound.

Although they are just getting started, they hope to see the scope of their business grow this spring. Foster and Blakely applied for a $2,337 Fred Meyer Charitable Trust grant to help the student company pay for advertising, supplies and, most important, a seed cleaning machine. The company has passed one review and should know by mid-December if it will receive the grant.

With the seed cleaning machine, Foster says the students can broaden the company to include the identification, harvest and marketing specifically of wildflowers from the Columbia Gorge. He says he knows of no other company that offers seeds from the gorge and, if the grant is awarded, it could allow the students to market outside of the immediate area.

Collecting their own seeds would also open up new experiences for the students, particularly scientific experiences, he says. The students would have to search for and identify the plants as they are flowering, mark the area, return later when the seeds are mature and collect them.

Foster says the collection operation would force the students to face other issues, such as whether permission is required to search and harvest on different public or private lands and what they should do to protect delicate environments.

On average, Foster and Blakely expect the students will spend approximately one third of their time as the "Wild Bunch," although the number of hours in any one week will vary. For their efforts, the students will receive whatever revenue is left after the company's operating expenses are paid. Each student will get in proportion to the number of hours that student has spent on the project. The teachers will let the students decide if they will cash out, invest part or all of their profit or do something else.

"The students we have are very motivated to work," Foster says. "They're interested in the ideas of profit and investment."

The teachers are also clearly excited about starting the project and Blakely, who regularly places students in mentorships and jobs, says observing the students will show educators what they need to do to prepare students for work.

The company's "Wild Bunch" logo was drawn by Lynne Schuepbach, a humanities aide at Hood River Valley High School, but Blakely says the company name was developed jointly by the teachers and students. It "just sort of described the kids and the flowers at the same time," she says.

However, Foster adds, "we're promoting wild flowers rather than wild kids."

Interested persons who don't get Wild Bunch Seed Co. catalogs during the door-to-door canvas can get them soon at the district's Community Education Office at 10th and Eugene.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Hood River Valley Opportunity School

the WILD BUNCH

SEED COMPANY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Wildflower Seed

Catalog

WHAT IS THIS "WILD BUNCH SEED COMPANY" ?

Our company is "owned" and operated by the students of Hood River County School District Opportunity School. This employment training project has been designed to aide in the transition between classroom and workplace and to help kids stay in high school. By participating in real-life situations, continuously created by such a project, students begin to see "why" they need basic academic skills. Students share-the-profit, according to time spent on the project.

Another purpose, of course, is to bring people closer to nature through wildflower gardening.

QUALITY and PRICES

SAVE 70 to 90% ON OUR SEED PRICES!

We believe that providing a service or a product is an important contribution to society and that profit should not be the only motive in business.

Many seed companies have very high profit margins. You will see by our "price comparisons" that we are interested in giving you the best prices possible. We also prepay postage on all seed orders despite rising postage rates. We charge only a $1.00 handling fee on orders less than $10.00. When comparing our prices with other companies, please take into account the additional postage you would normally pay.

We will absorb slight price increases from our suppliers - but reserve the right to make price changes without notice for extreme price rises.

ABOUT OUR PRODUCT:

We have a "test meadow" at Mt. Hood, Oregon. Therefore, only varieties of wildflowers which have proved successful are included in our catalog. When growing wildflowers, it is important to obtain seed grown in your own state whenever possible. All seed we currently sell is grown commercially in Oregon's Willamette Valley, and has a high germination rate. Plants from Oregon seed are more adapted to our climate. Whenever possible, we will pass on information about germination rates to you when your order is filled.

FUTURE PLANS:

To encourage a deeper sense of identity with the Columbia Gorge environment, we hope to offer seeds collected locally in the near future. We look forward to alot of woods-combing and handpicking, which will be necessary to make these non-commercial varieties available to the public.

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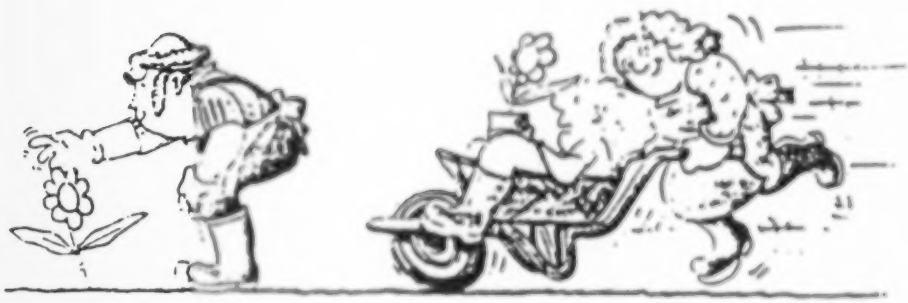
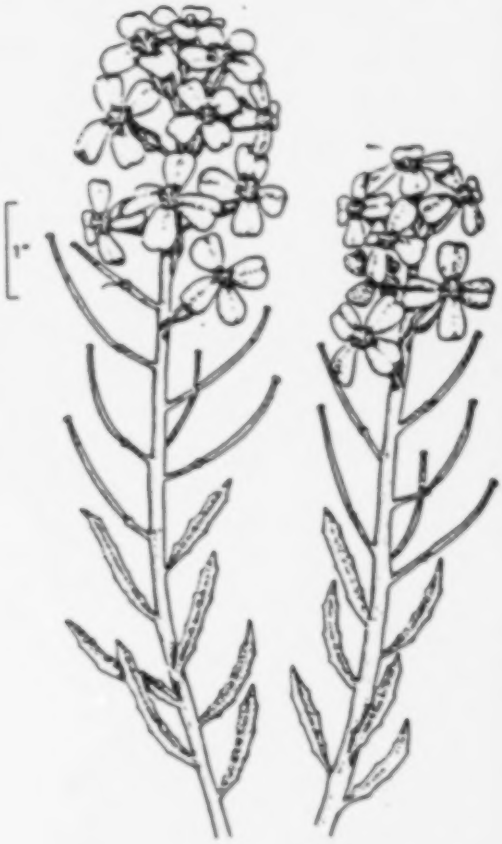


ORANGE WALLFLOWER (Erysimum Allioni)

COLOR: Brilliant light orange.
HEIGHT: 1 - 2 feet
TYPE: Perennial
FLOWERING TIME: May - Early summer.
EXPOSURE: Full sun.



The showy light orange color and multitude of blooms makes this one of the loveliest plants in our collection. It blooms at the same time as Blue Flax, which makes it all the more striking. It also looks great with any blue, yellow, or white flowers of medium height.

GROWING NOTES:

It comes easily from seed; we've experienced a good germination rate. Plant ¼" deep. Any well-drained soil is fine. Most plants flower the first year, some the next year. It is fairly drought tolerant, but needs water until more mature. Plant in late summer or early fall for spring flowers. It can also be sown in the spring. Orange Wallflower produces viable seed for replanting. (Inside of very slender pods; seeds are ready when they turn light brown). Once established, the plants are not harmed by frost.

We have great cascading drifts mixed with daisies and Blue Flax in our sloping meadows in the Mt. Hood area.

Erysimum Allioni is related to, and closely resembles the Erysimum Capitatum pictured. Non-invasive.

COMPARE:

Another company offers 100 seeds for 95¢. Our 50¢ packet includes at least 900 seeds. (Over seventeen times as many seeds per dollar spent!)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHITE YARROW (Achillea Millifolium)

COLOR: White
HEIGHT: 1-2 feet
(taller in garden)
TYPE: Perennial
FLOWERING TIME: Early Summer
EXPOSURE: Full Sun

Yarrow excells in cultivation and will even persist under poor growing conditions. It is valuable for its long-blooming and its evergreen, fern-like leaves which form an attractive ground cover. It grows in dense clumps. Yarrow is a natural fire retardant. Given modest attention from the gardener, the plant's appearance is far superior to roadside plants. The plant's lush presence during the dormant season is perhaps its most endearing trait.

It is one of the easiest perennials to maintain throughout the garden to soften the bright red, yellow, and orange flowers so predominant in the summer. It should also be included in any meadow setting.

GROWING NOTES:

Plant 1/8" deep in light organic soil (although Yarrow can also endure dry, impoverished soil). Expect germination within a week or so. Yarrow requires little maintenance.

To encourage a neater groundcover of basal foliage, prune away most of the stems after flowering. The tight, fernlike clumps of foliage provide effective contrast for other plants, an evergreen groundcover, or as accent clumps.

Overly rich soil may cause excessively tall or aggressive plants.

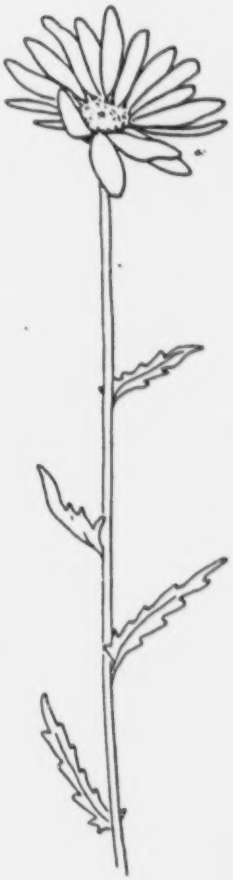
COMPARE:

Another company offers 500 seeds for 95¢. Our 50¢ packet includes at least 5000 seeds. (19 times the amount of seed for your money!)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OX EYE DAISY (Chrysanthemum Leucanthemum)

COLOR: White with
Yellow center
HEIGHT: 1-2 feet
TYPE: Hardy Perennial
FLOWERING TIME: June-July
EXPOSURE: Full Sun



Everyone is familiar with the cheerful daisy. Some of us carry fond memories of entire fields abloom with daisies. How does that old song go? "I feel like the sky is raining daisies." Introduced into America by early settlers, it is a favorite "naturalized" roadside wildflower. It is colorful, long blooming, easy to raise, and survives quite well in a sunny area. (We were surprised to find some blooming, also, in partial shade).

GROWING NOTES:

It's hardy and requires little maintenance in the garden or elsewhere. It can be grown in poor soil; in fact, overly rich soil may produce tall, spindly stems. Plant 1/8" deep in full sun. With soil temperature of 70°, you can expect germination within two weeks.

It usually takes two years to flower. Plant seeds outdoors in late summer or early fall, directly on sites where plants are desired. Some seeds will germinate quickly and develop as basal rosettes during the winter to produce flowers the following summer. These are good in the perennial border or on a dry bank or naturalizing in large open areas.

Sometimes daisy seeds have a low germination rate, but we've had good luck with these.

Avoid heavy mulches. Be sure to water during dry spells. Ox Eye Daisy will bloom a second time - a month or two beyond their normal flowering time if their blooms are removed when they begin to fade.

COMPARE:

Another company offers 50 seeds for $1.50. Our 50¢ packet includes at least 720 seeds. (Forty-three times more seeds per dollar spent!)

BLANKET FLOWER (Gaillardia Aristata)

COLOR: Yellow and Red
(brownish-purple discs)
HEIGHT: 1-2 feet
FLOWERING TIME: Summer
TYPE: Hardy Perennial
EXPOSURE: Full Sun

Handsome, vigorous Blanket Flower grows wild in the Columbia Gorge area. It is appropriately called Indian Blanket for its large, showy, yellow and red daisy-like flowers. The mature leaves are dandelion-shaped, but also thick and hairy. The leaves, rubbed between your fingers, leave behind a fragrant, minty smell. It is well worth preserving as part of our heritage. Long-blooming Blanket Flower offers a beautiful embellishment along roadsides and is also great for picking.

GROWING NOTES:

This pioneer isn't particular about soil and even performs best in well-drained, infertile soils. Once established Blanket Flower is quite drought tolerant. It comes easily from seed and thrives with full sun and heat. Germination time is approximately two weeks. It's safest to plant seeds in spring 1/8" - 1/4" deep. You can also plant seeds in the fall, but make sure you allow plenty of time for the plants to mature before winter. Blanket Flower generally blooms at the end of the first summer. Seeds taken from your own "homegrown" Blanket Flower will be very well adapted to your specific area.

COMPARE:

Another company offers 100 seeds for 95¢. Our 50¢ packet includes at least 250 seeds. (Over five times the amount of seed per dollar spent!)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BLUE FLAX (Linum Lewisii)

COLOR: Soft Blue
HEIGHT: 1-2 feet
EXPOSURE: Full Sun
FLOWERING TIME: May through Summer
TYPE: Carefree, hardy perennial drought resistant

Blue Flax is extremely hardy and dependable in our area. It seems oblivious to winters.

The bottom of the stem is somewhat woody and grows in a wide range of soils. For all its toughness, the flowers are soft and fragile looking. They bloom from morning until late afternoon. Yesterday's blooms are replaced by new ones each day throughout the summer. It makes a charming contrast to Orange Wallflower, Orange Poppies, Daisies, or Blanket Flower.

GROWING NOTES:

Blue Flax is drought tolerant and should not be over watered after established. Plant 1/8" deep and keep moist until germinated. Rapid germination occurs at temperatures of 70° or above. Plant in open, sunny areas.

Plant in fall or spring where you wish it to grow. It lasts three to four years and usually re-seeds. Some will flower the first year, others will follow the next year. Our seed has a high germination rate. Once established it is not harmed by frost. Blue Flax is also excellent for naturalizing large, open areas. To conserve water, plant in early fall for large meadow-type areas. We've had great luck growing this one in our "no-work" meadows.

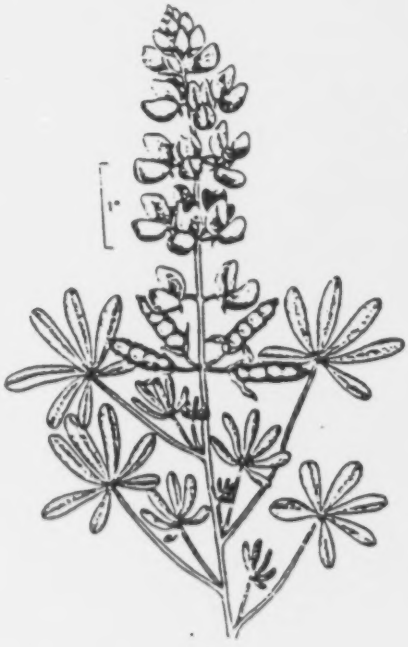
COMPARE:

Another company offers 50 seeds for $1.50. Our 50¢ packet includes at least 900 seeds. (54 times the amount of seeds per dollar spent!)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERENIAL LUPINE (Lupinus Perennis)

COLOR: Blue or Purple
with White
HEIGHT: 1-2 feet
TYPE: Perennial
FLOWERING TIME: May-June
EXPOSURE: Full Sun



With its whorls of blue and white pea-like flowers atop 1-2 foot stems, Lupine is one of the finest wildflowers for growing in this area. Here is a hardy, erect perennial to provide the highly coveted blue color in your landscape year after year. The gracefully cut leaves are an added bonus. Perennial Lupine is very striking in drifts inter-planted with Orange Wallflower. It is also a good plant for naturalizing large open areas.

GROWING NOTES:

The seeds require "scarification" in order to germinate. This means the seed coat must be scratched to allow moisture to enter. Rub the seeds between two sheets of medium grit sandpaper and let them soak overnight in warm water. Plant 1/8" - 1/4" deep in early spring. Keep soil moist when the seeds are germinating and while seedlings are becoming established. To prevent mildew problems, don't over water once flowering starts. Germination takes two to three weeks at 68°. Lupine generally self-seeds.

Lupine does not transplant well. If this is necessary, concentrate on the younger ones in the fall or early spring. Older plants have strong, deep roots, making transplanting difficult.

As with many legume seeds, some people "innoculate" their seeds with a nitrogen-fixing bacteria, before planting. However, we haven't found it necessary to do so in local soil.

Lupines thrive in poor soil. They like acid soils on the dry side, sandy loams, and dry clayish loams.

COMPARE: Another company offers 25 seeds for 95¢. Our 50¢ packet includes over 45 seeds. (Almost 3½ times the amount of seed per dollar value!)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LANCE-LEAVED COREOPSIS (Coreopsis Lanceolata)

COLOR: Yellow
HEIGHT: 1-2 feet
TYPE: Hardy Perennial
FLOWERING TIME: Early Summer
EXPOSURE: Full Sun

The North American favorite is an easily-grown, tough perennial with yellow, 2" daisy-like flowers. The long slender stem makes this species an excellent cut flower. They get along well with "no-work gardeners" since they require little, if any, maintenance, except for an occasional watering during summer dry periods. They are long flowering and perfect for naturalizing amongst roadside grases.

GROWING NOTES:

This Coreopsis grows in moist or dry soils and can tolerate drought once established. It tolerates a wide range of soils and can also take <u>light</u> shade. Plant seeds 1/8" - 1/4" deep in spring or fall. We plant ours early in the fall to take advantage of the rainy season. Percent of germination has been high and takes two to three weeks (7-10 days at 70°). Lance-leave Coreopsis flowers the second year. Plants overwinter once established and produce viable seed (which are attractive to birds). Coreopsis, though undemanding, seem to like mulch, manure, and compost. Established plants thrive on little water. We've found spreading a light layer of straw over freshly planted seeds helps defend against birds.

COMPARE:

Another company offers 100 seeds for 95¢. Our 50¢ packet contains at least 440 seeds. (Over nineteen times the dollar value!)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CALIFORNIA POPPY (Eschscholzia California)

COLOR: Deep Orange
HEIGHT: 1-2 Feet
FLOWERING TIME: May
TYPE: Annual or short-lived Perennial
EXPOSURE: Full Sun

California Poppy is especially suited to our area and is one of the best known flowers in the Columbia Gorge. Almost everyone is familiar with its lustrous orange petals which open widely to herald the sunshine and close at night or on cloudy days. Its feathery blue-green leaves also add to its considerable charm.

GROWING NOTES:

Though ususally considered an annual, it can be a short-lived perennial under favorable conditions (warmer climates). If planted in the spring, after danger of hard frost (mid-March) and raised to maturity, many plants will over-winter, even in Hood River County. The seedlings grow rapidly and are easy to identify, but can be killed by very cold weather. Plant 1/4" - 1/8" deep directly where poppies are desired, since they do not transplant well. Germination takes approximately two weeks. Once established, California Poppy will produce viable seed which would be better collected and sown in the spring in our area. In naturalization settings, it will freely self-seed and sometimes even become weedy. California Poppy is adaptable to almost any garden conditions as long as it has well drained soil and plenty of sun. It will bloom longer if spent blossoms are removed. Lupine is a traditional companion plant.

COMPARE:

Another company offers 400 seeds for 95¢. Our 50¢ packet includes at least 900 seeds. (Over four times the dollar value!)

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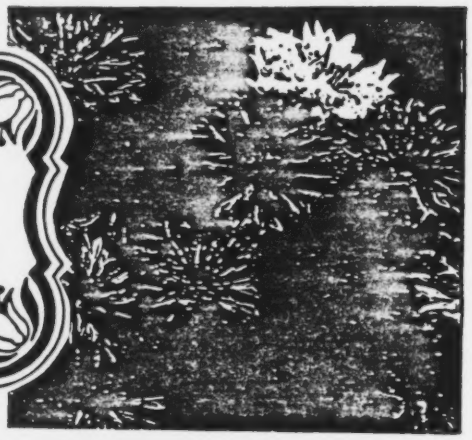
DWARF

BACHELOR BUTTON (Centaurea Cyanus)

(POLKA DOT MIX)

COLOR: Blue, Maroon, Pink, Red, Lavender, and White
HEIGHT: 16"
TYPE: Annual
FLOWERING TIME: Late May-June
EXPOSURE: Full Sun



The hardy Bachelor Button is so familiar that little description is necessary. Nature repeatedly shows us that this flower is especially well suited to our area. This charming dwarf is an ideal garden plant. It is an excellent contrast to other flowers (especially the white and orange varieties). Bachelor Button is also valuable and long lasting as a cut flower. We offer approximately five times as many seeds as other companies per dollar spent.

GROWING NOTES:

Plant seeds 1/8" - 1/4" deep in spring as soon as ground can be worked. Bachelor Buttons require moderate water. Some people add a little lime to very acid soils when growing Bachelor Buttons. It often re-seeds and is therefore suitable with the rest of our collection for naturalizing large, open areas.

COMPARE:

Another company offers 100 seeds for 85¢. Our 50¢ packet includes at least 300 seeds (five times the dollar value).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BABY BLUE EYES (Nemephila Insignis)

COLOR: Blue with white center.
HEIGHT: 4" - 12"
TYPE: Hardy Annual
FLOWERING TIME: Late April - Early May
EXPOSURE: Full sun to partial shade.

We included this annual with our mostly perennial collection because it grows so well in our region. We were surprised to note some self-seeding and over wintering of new seedlings. We didn't plant any new seeds the second year, but Baby Blue Eyes came back in respectable numbers.

The real reason we included this one is that its clear blue flowers with white centers are so charming and irresistable that we couldn't help ourselves. Baby Blue Eyes make a good bulb cover.

Baby Blue Eyes are the earliest blooming wildflowers in this year's collection. In many situations, we found its low stature to be a virtue, and even grown with taller plants, it seems to be appropriate, since it shows up before the taller flowers bolt.

GROWING NOTES:

Plant 1/8" deep in desired location. Germination is best (1 - 2 weeks) below 80°F and during periods of short-day length. The new seedlings are not bothered by spring frosts. Self-seeded plants will remain as a rosette of leaves until flowering the following spring. Soil should be moist, but not wet. Flowering season is prolonged if the soil is kept moist during flowering. Baby Blue Eyes are easy to grow and adaptable to most garden soils. Plant in fall or early spring (March-April).

COMPARE:

Another company offers 100 seeds for $1.50. Our 50¢ packet contains approximately 550 seeds (sixteen times the seed per dollar spent).

NOTE: Some botanists divide this annual into three separate species. The picture is actually of Nemophilia Menziesii which looks nearly the same as Nemophilia Insignis (both are called Baby Blue Eyes).

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PACIFIC NORTHWEST WILDFLOWER MIXTURE

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	TYPE	COLOR
Achillea millifolium	White Yarrow	P	White
Centaurea cyanus	Bachelor Button Mix	A	White/Blue/Pink
Cherianthus allioni	Siberian Wallflower	B	Orange
Chrysanthemum leucanthemum	Ox Eye Daisy	P	White
Clarkia ungiuculata	Clarkia	A	Pink/Red
Collinsia heterophyla	Chinese Houses	A	Purple
Coreopsis lanceolata	Lance Leaf Coreopsis	P	Yellow
Coreopsis tinctoria	Plains Coreopsis	A	Yellow/Red
Cynoglossum firmament	Chinese Forget-Me-Not	A	Blue
Delphinium ajacus	Rocket Larkspur	A	Mixed
Dianthus barbatus	Sweet William	A	Red/Pink
Eschscholtzia californica mix	California Poppy Mix	A	Red/White/Yellow
Eschscholtzia californica orange	California Poppy Orange	A	Orange
Gaillardia aristata	Blanket Flower	P	Yellow/Red
Godetia amoena	Farewell to Spring	A	Pink/Red
Gypsophila muralis	Baby's Breath	A	White
Iberis umbellata	Candytuft	A	Purple/Pink
Linaria moroccana	Toad Flax	A	Mixed
Linum lewisii	Blue Flax	P	Blue
Linum rubrum	Red Flax	A	Red
Lobularia maritima	Sweet Alyssum	A	White
Lupinus hederma	Sickle Keel Lupine	P	Blue
Nemophila menziesii	Baby Blue Eyes	A	Blue
Oenothera lamarkiana	Evening Primrose	B	Yellow
Papaver rhoeas	Corn Poppy	A	White/Red
Rudbeckia hirta	Black Eye Susan	P	Yellow
Silene armeria	Catchfly	A	Pink

DRY LAND WILDFLOWER MIXTURE

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	TYPE	COLOR
Achillea millefolium	White Yarrow	P	White
Centaurea cyanus	Cornflower	A	Blue
Cherianthus allionii	Siberian Wallflower	B	Yellow
Chrysanthemum leucanthemum	Ox Eye Daisy	P	White
Coreopsis tinctoria	Plains Coreopsis	A	Yellow/Maroon
Dianthus barbatus	Sweet William	P	Pink/Red/White
Dimorphotheca aurantiaca	African Daisy	A	White/Orange/Salmon
Eschscholtzia californica	California Poppy	TP	Yellow/Orange
Gaillardia aristata	Perennial Gaillardia	P	Yellow/Red
Gaillardia pulchella	Annual Gaillardia	A	Yellow/Red
Gypsophila elegans	Baby's Breath	A	White
Linaria maroccana	Spurred Snapdragon	A	Pink/Yellow/White
Linum lewisii	Blue Flax	P	Blue
Lobularia maritima	Sweet Alyssum	TP	White
Oenothera lamarckiana	Evening Primrose	P	Yellow
Papaver rhoeas	Corn Poppy	A	White/Pink/Red
Ratibida columnifera	Prairie Coneflower	B/P	Yellow/Red
Rudbeckia hirta	Black Eye Susan	B	Yellow
Silene armeria	Catchfly	A/B	Pink

GENERAL GROWING TIPS:

All seeds in this catalog are suitable for naturalizing in an open meadow, field, hillside, roadside, forest, borders, or garden beds, provided they are watered until established.

Wildflowers look more spectacular in drifts or bunches as we find them in nature.

The best time to plant (except California Poppy, Blanket Flower, and the annuals) is when the fall rains have started. Any wildflowers (but especially those mentioned above) can be planted in the spring as early as the ground can be worked. Seedlings are usually unaffected by March or April frost and seeds will sprout when the time is right.

Wildflower seeds, like all seeds should be kept moist until germination. After sprouting, wildflowers should be watered one or two times weekly during the first dry season. After seedlings have made vigorous growth, you can reduce watering to once each week or two.

If you've sown a mixture the previous fall, you'll get the best "waves" of wildflowers in May and June. The annuals, of course, will bloom the first year; the perennials will generally bloom the second growth season. In three years your planting will fully mature.

Many people who have a lot of unwanted weeds address the problem before planting their wildflower seeds. Pick your own preferred method (hand weeding, plowing, or Round Up).

In creating meadows, most people till the soil in late summer, water until weeds appear and then till again immediately before planting in the fall. Seeds are sown, raked in, and soil firmed.

Now that you have been advised about the standard, safe method, let's talk about our "natural growing" experiments. If you are fortunate enough to live near a forest or in a semi-natural area, and want to save existing native plants, (or if you're an "armchair gardener"), you may wish to try the brave, no-tilling method. This would be for adventure's sake, so <u>don't</u> blame us. Be prepared to seed heavier to balance reduced germination rates and expect three years for the meadow to establish well. This method takes a lot of patience and more "mental tolerance" of weeds until you meadow matures. Results can <u>eventually</u> pay off because you merely add to existing natives. It is worthwhile to study native plants which you already have growing on your site - perhaps many you are unaware of - before you decide to till the soil. It would be a shame to plow under wild strawberries, Lupine, or Balsam Root, for example, for the purpose of creating a wildflower meadow.

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GROWING TIPS (CONTINUED):

In the "natural growing" method, you gently rake off leaves, etc., to expose the soil, but without harming existing plants. Some hand weeding of the "invasive" weeds or orchard grass will be desirable. Then you seed over the existing plants. After sowing, broadcast 1/8 - 1/4" of rich soil or finely ground compost over your seeds. Finish off with a very light (approximately ¼") layer of straw to protect seeds from birds. The straw (not hay) will help improve your soil. Water area and keep moist. The native plants, or last year's wildflowers will recover quickly from your "trampling." After wildflowers are established, broadcasted clover seed will also help enrich your soil (no need to cover). Lupine or Vetch also help.

Besides preserving the existing native plants, this method maintains the ecological gifts of spiders, earthworms, gofers, moles, dragon flies, soil microbes, enzymes, various desirable insects, and bird food from existing plants - all of which will aide any "restoration" project. Yes, even gofers and moles help meadows by plowing new ground for seeds.

Regardless of your original soil preparation method, you will have to practice the "overseeding" process when you add annuals or non-perennials to your established meadow to avoid destroying what you've built up.

Hand weeding may be necessary from time to time (after a good rain), but eventually you can give that up because your wildflowers will crowd out most of the weeds.

To build up soil gradually, broadcast about 1/2" of compost mixed with composted manure or a very light layer of mulch each season (only with established plants).

Except for the process described above, fertilization is not recommended unless the soil is extremely sterile. One benefit of wildflowers is that good results are generally obtained in soils low in nutrients. Overly rich garden soil or fertilizer can cause long stems which require staking and will also encourage weeds.

Suggested seeding rate is four ounces per 1000 square feet and 8-10 pounds per acre. Non-agressive grasses or low growing clovers (like white clover) can be sown to aid in soil stabilization and to crowd weeds out. We usually go easy on this type of "companion" seed (try 1-4 pounds per acre or 1/8 to 1/4 the amount of wildflower seed). It's best to give the wildflower seedlings a 1-2" headstart and then "overseed." Do not use rye grasses, blue grasses, or orchard grasses in wildflower areas because these are much too aggressive.

Mature wildflower vegetation should be mowed in the fall to a height of approximately 6 inches, after flowering and all seeds mature. If you wish to sow additional seeds, this is the time. Mowing will scatter seeds and allow for removal of excessive plant growth. You can collect your "wildflower hay" with a rake or pitchfork and spread it over a new site where you want wildflowers.

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GROWING TIPS (CONTINUED):

"Overseeding" is a good practice to keep dominant species from over populating. We occasionally mow a dominant type before seed set to limit our stand of a particular species, or mow tall-types before flowering for a shorter, neater look.

Your first generation of "homegrown" wildflower seed will be even hardier and perfectly acclimatized to your area.

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Hooker's Evening Primrose (Oenothera Hookeri)	$1.25	1.75	4.50	8.75	14.00	B
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Butterfly Weed (Ascepias Tuberosa)	17.50	35.00	---	---	---	P
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